

WOMAN'S PROVOKING EFFICIENCY IN BUSINESS



Who knows but that some day we men may have to buy our clothes from a store run by a woman and with women buyers and clerks

Man Has No Time (and Perhaps No Talent) for Shopping, Hence Feminine Hands Control the Strings of His Purse, Much as He May Hate to Acknowledge the Fact and Blind as He Is to the Economic March That Is Being Stolen

By HUGH C. MacDONOUGH Illustrations by A. B. WALKER

have they taken liberties with it; they have literally "swiped it."

Factory hours, office hours, laboring hours and even banking hours consume the greater part of the daylight moments when the stores are open for business. A man simply has not the time to go perhaps a mile to buy a new shirt, the family groceries or inspect a new suite of dining-room furniture. In truth he has proved his incompetence in this direction so often, to mention only the well known example of the matching of a bit of dress goods, that he has been largely excused from this job.

It seems only fair to confess at this point that whatever abilities we men may have in the business world and in buying and selling in wholesale quantities, we have never manifested any particularly ability, even marked intelligence, in the art of going to a store and buying something without being sold a wrong article or making some similar blunder.

Only a few years ago the cry went up from the women in industry and commerce that they did not have time to do their shopping. An effort was made to get stores to stay open after the regular hours to accommodate them. This is the situation that man has been up against for so long a time that he has ceased to complain about it. Instead he gives his purse to his wife with the prayer that all will be for the best.



The fact seems at last to have been rather well established, however, that man, the spender, is slowly but surely making his exit

The joke about the Christmas cigars and neckties presented by friend wife is almost as old as the mother-in-law yarn. The rather amusing fact, according to a recent survey made by one of the largest trade associations in the apparel line which covered some 1,500 stores, is that 75 per cent of men's furnishings are bought by women.

(Authority: National Retail Dry Goods Association, New York.) Either the above mentioned joke is a cruel calumny on the buying ability of the wife or sweetheart or men have become resigned to the cigars that are "wonderful

bargains" and the neckties that they would not be "seen at a dogfight in" and to the shirts that are a size too large or too small.

It might be pertinent to inquire just what we men do with the small amount of cash that we keep in our possession. During the last few years the men's wear stores have begun to recognize what important customers the women are and have been practicing all kind of arts to lure them into the shops. When you stop to consider it, you realize that women have their fingers in almost every sort of buying, whether it be a new house, an automobile, or a life insurance policy. In the face of all this the old fiction that women don't know anything about money and are entirely ignorant of business has steadily persisted. For



If not, well, man must either adapt his product to please the few men who still hold their own purse strings, or else he might as well close up shop

egotistic reasons it may be continued, but practically it is a fast fading fancy.

As a producer of merchandise the mere man may be absolutely essential as a distributor he may have his place in the world; but as a buyer of the finished product he is simply not in the running. Friend wife has monopolized the market. All during the time that the women have been acquiring this death grip on the family purse they have been persistently agitating for something like votes, or pure government or something else.

Women may smile in the knowing way of "What Every Woman Knows." But this article isn't written for the enlightenment of the opposite sex. It is a warning to men.

From some source—certainly not from the men themselves—a lot of women have got it into their heads that they know how to handle money. Perhaps it was from a few generations of training in the art of taking a bank clerk's modest income and making it do all kinds of tricks. Whether it be as a result of the feminist movement, the Nineteenth Amendment or what not, the American woman, it might as well be admitted, is in business to stay. More than that, unless we look sharp she seems in a fair way to drive men out of certain lines at least.

American womanhood, during the last generation, has been busy climbing down from the pedestal upon which she has been placed as the sole mistress of the home. Needless to say, a quantity of hard manual labor went with this "romantic" job, particularly if it included doing the family washing and working on the

business end of a broom or a scrubbing brush. Having practically taken over the job of buying merchandise that goes to feed and clothe her family and to furnish the home in which they live, the next step was naturally to take over the buying of the merchandise for the stores themselves. This is exactly what is happening at the present time.

From a standard publication that lists the buying staffs of the largest department stores of the country the evidence is presented that in five of the biggest stores in ten cities 42.3 per cent of the buying staffs are women.

(Authority: Sheldon's Directory of Retail Stores, New York.)

Disconcerting, is it not? If the issue of this same publication for the year 1917 is taken and a similar comparison is made it will be found that 31.5 per cent of the staffs were women at that time. In other words, at the rate of 2 per cent a year the women have been taking over the best paying jobs in the department stores. I will not be so rash as to predict what will take place within the next ten years if these delicate feminine creatures continue their assault upon man's stronghold, the business world.

These figures do not mean, of course, that 42.3 per cent of the buying for all retail stores is done by women. The percentage is probably highest in the department store and specialty shop field. But it must also be remembered that hundreds of millinery stores, candy shops, lunch counters, etc., are run entirely by women.

It has long been one of man's boasts as evidence of his own superiority that women could not even design their own clothes and that men had to run the women's departments of the stores. According to present tendencies, however, man may find himself limited to the buying and selling of his own clothing and a few similar lines that do not now appeal to women. Who knows but that some day we men may have to buy our clothes from a store run by a woman and with women buyers and clerks. How horribly ignominious!

With greater or less unanimity, a sort of mob action, the women have evidently decided that the retail field belongs to them from start to finish, and judging from present conditions it may not be so long before this is actually so.

Women are storming the gates of other lines of business and also the professions, demanding entrance in increasing numbers. In New York City at the present time, one doctor or surgeon in seventeen is a woman; among the lawyers and justices, there is one woman to every forty-four men.

In the business world outside of the retail field the increasing thousands of stenographers, bookkeepers, typists, etc., give evidence of the attractiveness of these fields. The number of stenographers and typists in New York City has more than doubled in the last ten years, having increased from 33,769 to 72,531. (U. S. Census.) It is indeed said that of all the workers in the business field these women could the least easily be spared. In only one field, domestic and personal service, has the number of women workers decreased in the last ten years, as far as New York State is concerned at least. Fields more remunerative and that have more social standing are proving more attractive.

Thus the cycle swings around. In the frontier days the woman was of necessity a very able-bodied person, capable of doing a day's work in the home or, in an emergency, in the field.

As the struggle for existence grew less keen, women had the opportunity of developing themselves and of becoming that ideal combination of frankness and reserve, gentleness and strength, femininity and capability that is known throughout the world as the "American" woman. But now the struggle is growing again more tense and more the women are being thrown "on their own."

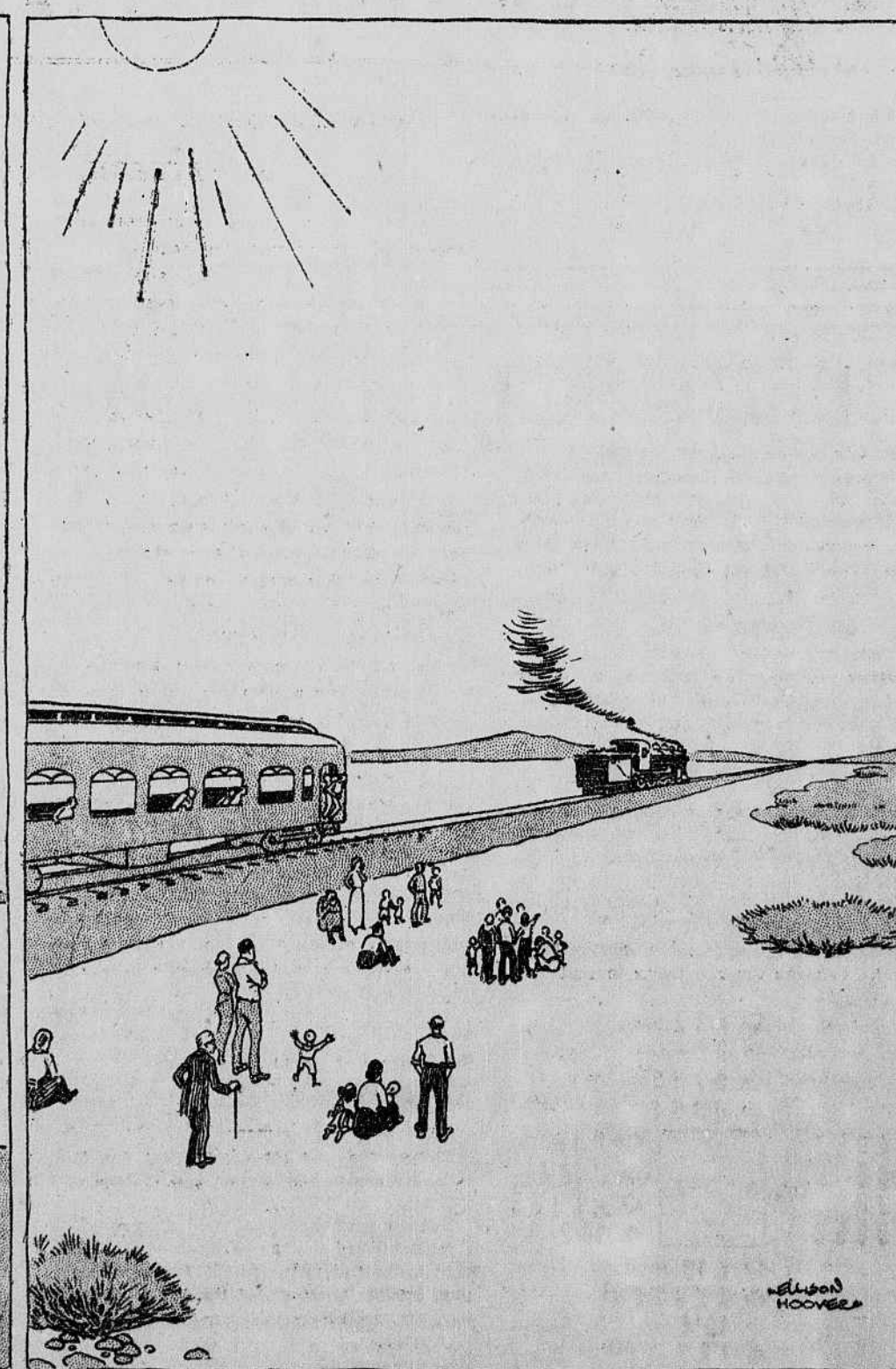
In the frontier days it was mainly a struggle of strength and courage. Now it is a test of brain and wits. Men, we must be on our guard lest they leave us sitting high and dry. About the woman in business this in general can be said: "When she is bad she is awful, but when she is good she is a wonder." A large number of them, it seems, are getting to be provokingly efficient.

THIS BEING MAROONED ALL DEPENDS

Drawn by ELLISON HOOVER



Pirates visited that form of punishment only on their own kind



But striking trainmen to-day leave innocent passengers stranded

THERE is no end to the inherent and persistent deception of women. I say this as a man and with an entirely masculine point of view. She occupies us with her whims and wiles, and then, presenting a totally different side of her nature, proceeds to steal an economic march on us. The fact seems at last to have been rather well established that man the spender is slowly but surely making his exit. To him is allowed some of the joy of battle in the business war, the pleasure of "bringing home the bacon" in a big deal and depositing the loot in the bank. With that act he is practically finished. The other sex now steps in and by the aid of the checkbook or dainty fingers not loath to touch the lucre proceeds to distribute the swag and the sweat of the brow of the father or husband. Be he a digger in the ditches, a skilled workman at his bench, a loathed "white collar" man, or a high-priced executive, his function is the same—to earn money, not to spend it.

This order of things has been going on for some time, a long time in fact, particularly in this country.

In view of the probability of things becoming worse instead of better, from the masculine point of view, it seems pertinent, or perhaps impertinent, according to the women, to call attention to some of these "goings on." The women are not overanxious to do this. With all of the acumen of good strategists they focus the attention at one place while continuously digging in at some other point of operation.

During the last few generations man has been so tremendously busy in the building of this complex, mechanical and artificial civilization of ours that he has not had time to spend the fruits accruing from his efforts. Some one had to do this, and without so much as a "thank you, kind sir," the wife and daughters have taken up the task. They seem to have made quite a complete job of it. Various authorities estimate that she, woman, spends all the way from 85 to 92 per cent of all the money expended in retail stores.

(Authorities: National Retail Dry Goods Association, New York City; Ida Bailey Allen, Home Economic Expert, Philadelphia; New York League of Advertising Women.)

A paltry 8 to 15 per cent is left for us men to spend for cigars and an occasional new shirt or necktie, if this can be secured without the supervision of wives or sweethearts, and perhaps on occasion a bottle of invigorating spirits. If disuse of a faculty can rob an individual of it entirely, then the men of this country seem to be in a fair way to have their assumed ability to spend a nickel to the best advantage atrophy and wither away.

No one seems to know definitely how much money is annually expended across the counters of the retail stores for all kinds of merchandise. A magazine of national circulation, however, states that, according to studies which they made, some \$12,000,000,000 is expended annually for foods, \$5,000,000,000 for dry goods and ready to wear, \$1,000,000,000 for candy, almost \$1,500,000,000 for furniture, to quote only a few of the outstanding items.

(Authorities: Division of Commercial Research Advertising Department, Curtis Publishing Company.)

Men who shudder at the thought of their wives having complete control over a checkbook and a bank account will no doubt be utterly depressed at the thought of women spending even 85 per cent of all of these billions. Perhaps they can extract some satisfaction from the fact that they can scarcely be called parsimonious in the way in which they supply their families with spending money. The effect on bachelors will probably be to make them cling more tightly than ever before to the uncrowned glories of single blessedness. Perhaps it is hardly fair to bring up more figures, but when it is remembered that during the war, when we were rushing commodities of all kinds to Europe, the highest total was only \$8,000,000,000 for one year it will be seen that the hand that controls the family purse